

TRAVEL SMART

Avoid long traffic jams by getting the train to the seaside. The Family & Friends Railcard gives you a third off adult fares and 60% off for up to four kids.

6 reasons to visit

Torquay

Pack your bucket and spade and head off to the English Riviera

Soak up the sun

1 Being England, we can't guarantee the sunshine! But this part of South Devon enjoys more hours of sunlight than anywhere else in the region. You'll even spot palm trees along the seafront. Who needs to go abroad?

Get close to nature

2 On Torquay seafront, Living Coasts, an award-winning zoo and aquarium, is home to fascinating marine life from around the world. It's open all year round, and the kids will love getting up close and personal with penguins, otters and seals as

well as 20 species of weird and wonderful fish.

Indulge in a cream tea

3 You can't visit Devon without having a cream tea – scones, clotted cream and strawberry jam – all washed down with a lovely cuppa. Enjoy at a cafe overlooking the stunning marina for the perfect holiday experience. But remember, it's cream first, then jam! This is Devon, not Cornwall...



Stay in style

4 Think B&Bs mean lumpy mattresses and shared bathrooms? Not at Torquay's The 25 Boutique B&B. Owners Andy and Julian have racked up awards, including being named the second best B&B in the UK and ninth best in the world! You're sure of a warm welcome and luxurious and stylish rooms, with a level of service that can't be beaten (the25.uk).

Take a dip

5 With 20 beaches and coves along the English Riviera's coast, you'll be spoilt for choice. Blue Flag and Seaside Award-winning Oddcombe Beach is a favourite all year round for its stunning red sands and clean stretch of sea for paddling. There's a cafe and loos, so you can set up camp for the day.

Dine on local delicacies

6 Orestone Manor, on the outskirts of Torquay, offers visitors a chance to take in the beautiful Devon countryside as well as the coast. The rooms at this Georgian manor are spectacular, offering amazing views – and don't miss out on dinner here either. The chefs use Devon's local produce to make truly memorable meals. Be sure to book ahead (www.orestonemanor.com).

WHERE ELSE COULD I GO?

HOW ABOUT ONE OF THESE BRITISH BLUE FLAG BEACHES?

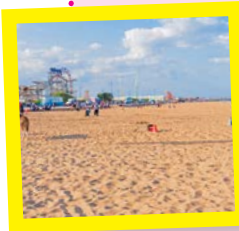
1 Cromer, Norfolk

This Victorian seaside resort is as popular as ever, famous for its crabs and end-of-pier show.



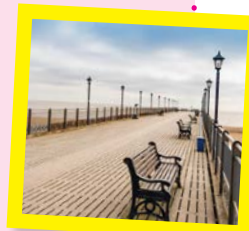
2 Roker, Sunderland

A family favourite that's fun even in winter, when Sunderland Illuminations brighten up the seafront.



3 Skegness, Lincolnshire

Perfect for the traditional British seaside experience with donkeys and a pleasure beach on the seafront.



Torquay has buckets of seaside charm

WORDS: KATE WILLIAMS. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, REX/SHUTTERSTOCK